

## **PaCC Position Statement: Brighton and Hove City Council's proposals for Special School & Pupil Referral Unit re-organisation.**

**12<sup>th</sup> June 2017**

### **Introduction**

The Council began a consultation on the SEND review in 2016. For the full details on the proposal please follow this link [http://consult.brighton-hove.gov.uk/portal/bhcc/special\\_provision/special\\_school\\_pru\\_re-organisation](http://consult.brighton-hove.gov.uk/portal/bhcc/special_provision/special_school_pru_re-organisation)

The Parent and Carers Council (PaCC) has been involved in the Special Educational Needs (SEND) review from the early stages. Reps sit on the cross-party members group overseeing the review, as well as the SEND review project groups, and have been able to contribute the parent carer perspective to the proposals. PaCC has also been a key partner in attending the consultation events for parent carers, and PaCC reps have read the consultation feedback. PaCC feels that the Local Authority (LA) provided a good level of opportunity for parent/carers and young people to feedback their views to the LA.

(also see Patcham House and previous SEND review PaCC position statements <http://paccbrighton.org.uk/what-we-do/pacc-position-statements/> )

### **PaCC position on merger to form 3 hubs**

PaCC remains supportive of the proposed reorganisation of the Special Schools and Pupil Referral Units for the following reasons:

- in the current financial climate we believe better economies of scale should enable better use of funds and improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND;
- the significant investment of £7.5 million of capital funding to build new provision and improve existing buildings is a huge positive for SEND provision the city; additionally the 100k per hub, of ring fenced money that is budgeted for health therapies is again of positive value for children and young people;

*Parent Carers' Council (PaCC), Community Base, 113 Queens Road, Brighton BN1 3XG*  
• Tel: 01273 234 862 • email: [admin@paccbrighton.org.uk](mailto:admin@paccbrighton.org.uk) • [www.paccbrighton.org.uk](http://www.paccbrighton.org.uk)

- larger schools should provide greater flexibility of provision, as well as access to a broader curriculum, health provision, respite and the opportunities for an extended day outside of school hours.

However, key points to be considered are:

- for some children, smaller environments are important, which must be built into the design.

- Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) provision needs separate sites, in order to cater for different needs, both within and across age ranges. The different remits of the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and Homewood College need to be carefully considered within this context.

- the Local Authority needs to consider the implications of these proposals on home to school transport arrangements, including the impact of the extended day, which could raise equalities issues if transport is not provided for this element of the new provision.

- some parents remain concerned that there remains a gap in provision for the former Patcham House cohort, some of whom will be unable to manage in mainstream even with the support of a specialist facility. PaCC is aware of parent-led discussions about creation of an autism-specific free school, highlighting a perceived gap in provision.

### **Key concern: Loss of special school designation for Complex Needs**

It is proposed to replace provision for children with complex needs, currently at Patcham House, with a specialist facility. Furthermore, the East and West Hubs will only have the designation “Learning Disabilities”, despite Downs Park and the Cedar Centre currently having designation for “Learning Disabilities and Complex Needs”.

The loss of provision within special school for complex needs, for example children with ASC/ADHD/Dyslexia etc of average and above cognitive ability, is of high concern to some parents. Some children will not be able to access mainstream, even with the support of a specialist facility. For most children with ASC (autistic spectrum condition), the SEMH provision would not be appropriate. Out of city placements are both expensive, and not in the best of interests of the children, young people and their families. PaCC supports the aspiration of the Local Authority to reduce the number of out of city placements, but we are concerned that the proposals do not adequately support this aspiration.

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Special school provision is needed within the city for children and young people with complex needs which prevent them attending mainstream, but without a learning disability. Under the proposed designations, there is a gap in provision for this vulnerable group.

**PaCC asks why “Complex Needs” is no longer included in the proposed special school designations. PaCC recommends re-looking at the designation of the East and West Hubs to consider whether this should include complex needs, to provide greater flexibility of provision for some children. If not, then PaCC asks the Local Authority, how the needs of this group will be met within the city.**

### **PaCC position on extension of age range at the Hubs**

PaCC supports the extension of the age ranges at the hubs, for the following reasons:

- Extending the younger age range allows for greater flexibility of provision
- Extending the older age range will allow greater choice of post-16 provision for children and young people with SEND

However, a key point to consider is:

- There needs to be a parallel stream of work ensuring inclusion in mainstream improves alongside special school provision, across all age ranges including post-16. Support in mainstream must be prioritised to ensure there is parity of provision.

### **Recommendations going forward:**

As stated in our previous position statement, the success of these proposals will be very much dependent on the details of provision following merger. During the consultation, parent carers wanted to know what the provision would actually look like in order to decide whether they supported the proposed changes. While PaCC understand that these details are not part of the remit of the current consultation, we would like to put forward the following recommendations going forward:

#### **1. Continued co-production and engagement with parent carers.**

PaCC would like the assurance that parent carer involvement will continue until the end of the process. Engagement needs to be both with PaCC at a strategic level, and with parent carers at individual schools.

## **2. Use of consultation responses in design of provision**

Both this and the Patcham House consultation have provided a wealth of views on what currently works well in the city. We would like assurance that these responses will be used to inform future provision

## **3. Explicit use of evidence from schools in other authorities**

Parent carers would like to know how evidence from schools in other authorities is being used to inform the design of future provision.

## **4. Flexibility of provision**

Through reading consultation responses, it is clear that the needs and aspirations of different children and young people are extremely variable, and there is not a “one size fits all”. The ability to be flexible in provision and to respond to the needs of individual learners, including those who fall between mainstream and special environments, needs to be built into the design of the schools.

## **5. A clearer offer of Post 19 pathways for young people maintaining or requesting assessment for a new EHCP (Education and Health Care Plan).**

The Children’s and Families Act 2014 sets out four key areas, further education, training, supported internship and apprenticeships. PaCC seeks assurance that the Local Authority develops this offer in accordance with current legislation.

## **6. Evaluation of outcomes and success criteria**

PaCC believes that the success of the hubs as continued good and outstanding provision for CYP (children and young people) in the city must be evaluated to ensure that outcomes for children and young people are improved as a result of the restructure. PaCC therefore

recommends that the LA specify the success criteria on which improved outcomes for children and young people will be judged (e.g. reduction in NEET – Not in Education, Employment or Training - figures, fewer out of city placements, etc.)

## **7. Financial planning for gaps in provision**

PaCC recommends that there is an assessment of the impact on budgets of families seeking alternative provision, where they feel Brighton and Hove cannot meet their CYPs needs following the SEND review.

## **8. A citywide joined up approach to social care**

PaCC recommends all three hubs must work closely with the children's and adults disability teams, third sector providers and PaCC to ensure an equitable provision of social care in the city is achieved.

## **9. Communications**

Communication with the parent carer communities must be timely and carefully considered, in order to be transparent and avoid unnecessary anxiety throughout the transition and beyond.

PaCC welcome any communication on any of the issues contained in this document. You can contact us by emailing Fiona England  
PaCC Chair [\*\*fiona@paccbrighton.org.uk\*\*](mailto:fiona@paccbrighton.org.uk) or calling **01273 234862**

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The Parent Carers' Council (PaCC) is a parent-led forum which represents parent carers with children and young people with any kind of physical disability, learning disability, complex or long-term medical/health condition, or special educational need. The group was formed to enable parent carers to work closely together to help improve services and support. It aims to help parents get more directly involved in the strategic delivery of services for disabled children in Brighton & Hove and now has about 320 signed up members. This position statement was developed through discussions with our Steering Group members and our eight partner groups: mASCot, Kaleidoscope, Barnado's Link Plus, Extratime, Pebbles, Sweet Peas, T21, CHSWG and Amaze Face to Face.

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